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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR MINDEF SUDARSONO'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON

REF: A. 06 JAKARTA 13297 (EXDIS)
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 994

Classified By: CDA John A. Heffern, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Indonesian Defense Minister Dr. Juwono Sudarsono's April 16-18 visit to Washington offers a timely opportunity to push him on military reform and accountability and explore Jakarta's thinking on Iraq. We expect the key policy issue on Sudarsono's agenda will be Indonesia's progress on democratic reform and may include a specific request to integrate Indonesia's Special Armed Forces, KOPASSUS, into our bilateral military-to-military cooperation. Given that Washington is currently considering this very question, we should use the visit to delineate U.S. policy principles while eliciting Sudarsono's commitment to continued reform. Washington may also wish to engage Sudarsono to clarify recent GOI statements about the possibility, unlikely in our view, of sending troops to Iraq and to press for acceptance of the Ahtisaari proposal for Kosovo. End summary.

DEFMIN TO PUSH KOPASSUS TRAINING

[1](#)2. (C) Indonesian Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono intends to use his visit to Washington on April 16-18 to advance the bilateral mil-mil agenda. Director General for Defense Strategy Dadi Susanto told us on April 5 that Sudarsono was seeking meetings at the Department of Defense, the Department of State and with Congressional leaders, among others. Planned topics include reform of the Department of Defense (DEPHAN) and the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI), military budgeting, military-police cooperation, antiterrorism strategy and "the ongoing democracy process."

[1](#)3. (C) Sudarsono's comments to the Indonesian press on April 10 suggest that a central goal of his discussions with Pentagon, Congressional and other interlocutors will be an appeal for resuming military-to-military cooperation with the Indonesian Special Military Forces (KOPASSUS). Sudarsono's message is that KOPASSUS needs to be integrated into bilateral defense cooperation so that it can benefit from the impetus toward reform and professionalization that this cooperation offers and thereby become a better partner for the U.S. military. Sudarsono told the press he hoped the United States would resume the training of special units in all three branches of the TNI. Sudarsono made the statement in explicit reference to the upcoming Indonesia-U.S. Strategic Defense Dialogue scheduled for April 18-20 in Jakarta. He noted that the Indonesian request was a logical sequel to previous engagement steps including officer exchanges, defense planning assistance, joint review of security developments in the Asia-Pacific Region and joint

exercises.

¶4. (C) KOPASSUS and the TNI command are acutely aware of our incremental approach to reengaging with KOPASSUS. Cognizant of active U.S. cooperation with Indonesian Air and Sea Special Operations Forces, and police, KOPASSUS is understandably concerned about being left behind. Key military leaders desire to re-establish a working relationship with the U.S. armed forces and state they understand the importance the United States places on human rights and accountability. The best means of verifying the seriousness of that desire, in our view, is by observing them at close range in joint activities.

HUMAN RIGHTS VETTING A RECURRENT ISSUE

¶5. (C) Human-rights vetting remains a constant irritant in our current military-to-military relationship and occasionally flares up in emotional outbursts. Indonesian military leaders feel the United States is applying a double standard. One such outburst occurred recently when the TNI Chief of Operations, BG Bambang Darmono, refused to send a soldier from KOPASSUS to a PACOM conference (the funding source required vetting) because of the vetting process. Darmono asserted Indonesia was being subjected to heavier scrutiny than other countries in the region (which is accurate due to the TNI's problematic past). Darmono also charged that it was unfair to penalize all soldiers who had served in East Timor or whose units were considered to have engaged in human rights abuses in the 1990s, when there was little or no evidence of individual wrongdoing. Such "arbitrary" treatment was an obstacle to renewing the U.S.-Indonesia military-to-military relationship. Darmono's characterization of our criteria is distorted. Since most of our training is of individuals, we look at their specific assignments and activities. Presence in a specific area is not an automatic disqualifier but does draw additional

internal scrutiny.

MESSAGE ON VETTING

¶6. (C) DEPHAN and the TNI generally perceive vetting as being attached to the limitations placed on the Indonesian military because of its previous behavior. Sudarsono may expect that lifting the ban on engagement with KOPASSUS would be accompanied by a relaxation in vetting generally. We would appreciate Washington's reminding Sudarsono that any change in our level of cooperation with the TNI, including a decision to engage with KOPASSUS, will not alter the United States' legal requirement to vet. Given the stained history of the Indonesian military and the gaps in establishing accountability, we will need to continue to ensure that we are not training units or individuals in violation of the law. Our vetting stance will remain an active one so that there are no questions, either from Congress or the public, about the nature of U.S. cooperation with Indonesian security forces.

¶7. (C) Specific points which we have emphasized to the TNI are:

-- Indonesia cannot be exempt from U.S. law, which is worldwide.

-- Vetting of units and of individuals is a sine qua non for the provision of material and training assistance. U.S. missions worldwide are required to vet the recipients of U.S. security assistance.

-- Vetting occurs regardless of the level of military cooperation.

-- Where assistance to foreign militaries and other security forces is involved, vetting cannot be waived.

-- Because of Indonesia's history, vetting must be credible to those in Washington who are concerned about it; otherwise,

there can be no progress in our bilateral military reengagement. "No vetting, no training assistance."

INDONESIAN POLICY ON IRAQ

18. (C) Recent statements appearing in the press by TNI Chief Suyanto and Foreign Minister Wirajuda are general reiterations of President Yudhoyono's "three-track" Iraq policy (ref a) rather than statements of a more forward-leaning new policy. Suyanto's comments were a simple statement of fact that he would obey orders to deploy troops to Iraq if he received such orders. The comments in no way addressed the likelihood that such orders would be issued. We believe that Foreign Minister Wirajuda's comments to the effect that a force made up of troops from Muslim nations could be formed to deploy after the withdrawal of coalition forces much better reflects Indonesian theoretical thinking, and track in general terms with the comments of President Yudhoyono to President Bush. The Indonesians have made clear previously that any such deployment would have to be part of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. The sine qua non in such a deployment is that the Indonesians will want to see peace restored first. We do not believe that they will be willing to deploy in a situation that has any higher risk factor than their current UNIFIL deployment in Lebanon. Similarly, Indonesia has so far declined to consider opening an Embassy in Iraq due to the security climate there.

19. (C) We judge that there is an even greater obstacle to any deployment of Indonesian forces besides the risk factors that the Indonesians will clearly want to avoid. Any such deployment would likely face strong parliamentary and public opposition, particularly if it could in any way be portrayed by opponents as being in support of U.S. policies in Iraq. There are no constituencies in Indonesia which voice any support for the current presence of coalition forces. Any GOI activity would have to be successfully portrayed as a contribution to the removal of coalition forces. The Indonesian presence in Lebanon was sold domestically as helping to bring peace in the face of what was perceived locally to be unjustified Israeli military activities.

UNSC: IRAN AND KOSOVO

10. (C) Sudarsono's visit also offers an opportunity to urge a cabinet-level official of the GOI to press for Indonesia's support in implementing the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo, although the DefMin will not likely play a direct role in the GOI decision. Indonesia's doubts about the proposal center on the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity (ref

b). Washington may also wish to commend the GOI for its decision to support the recent UNSC resolution on Iran and Sudarsono in particular for his constructive public statements explaining the GOI's decision.

HEFFERN